

Why God is Right to Damn Wrong, Part 1 - Romans 1:18-19 – March 6th, 2011

- For those who like to read ahead to stay ahead, it's doubtless you've noticed that the rest of this chapter deals with intense subject matter.
- Actually, this series should carry with it a warning, as it will neither conform to the politically correct, or appeal to, the cotton candy Christian.
- To put it bluntly, it deals with abhorrent sexual sin, and unspeakable evil, in man, and why God will bring His wrath on this wickedness of man.

- It's for this reason that I've titled this series; "Why God is Right to Damn Wrong." Today will be part one of this study in this new series.
- This will take us through to the end of chapter one, which in so doing, prepares us for what's ahead in how that, it addresses us our hypocrisy.
- In other words, lest we be too quick to assign this wrath of God in judgment of other sinful people, we would do well to judge ourselves first.

- The reason for such a strong and serious start to this, the introduction of a new series, is because we as Christians are prone to sanitize sin.
- Seemingly, this casual and careless brand of modern day Christianity has made for a lackadaisical, lukewarm, Laodicean, last days church.
- Now please don't misunderstand what it is that I'm trying to say here. The clarion call to the church is to turn from our sin, lest we be judged.

"The message of Christianity is quickly becoming a system of enlightened thinking instead of a simple call to turn from sin and pursue a relationship with God."
Chuck Swindoll, "So You Want to be Like Christ"

"It will not only fail to help us, but will seriously harm us, to study the awful arraignment of God against human sin, unless we apply it to ourselves, thereby discovering our own state by nature. Therefore we have sought to make plain these terms which Paul uses, in view of today's sin. Christendom is rapidly losing sin-consciousness, which means losing God-consciousness; which means eternal doom..."

William Newell

- I believe this is why we have passages like we do here, as gnarly as it is, in our Bibles. God wants us conscious of the seriousness of our sin.
- Absent this sin-consciousness, we lose sins-seriousness. Then, when God brings His wrath and damnation, He is deemed harsh and unjust.
- It's my hope that this series will bring the seriousness of sin back to the forefront of our conscience so as to see the rightness of God's wrath.

1. They deliberately suppress the truth (Verse 18)

(18) The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

- v18 Paul goes from God's revealed righteousness to the revealed wrath against all godlessness of men who suppress the truth by wickedness.
- Now, some of your translations will render this as the wrath of God being revealed against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
- While I personally much prefer the NIV's translation of wickedness, there is a very important distinction that must be made before we move on.

- The ungodliness of men is understood to be sinning against God, and the unrighteousness of men is understood to be sinning against man.
- We see this in various places throughout the scriptures, not the least of which is in the law of God which we call the Ten Commandments.
- The first five commandments deal with our sinning against or obedience to God, and the second five deal with sinning against our fellow man.

- When we understand this delineation, it will enable us to get a better grip on the why behind the what of God's wrath and how it is just and fair.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I try, by way of illustration, to paint a picture of a courtroom setting on the canvass of the text.
- Picture the Apostle Paul as the prosecuting attorney in a case where unthinkable crimes warranting the death penalty, have been committed.

- With that as the backdrop, this becomes Paul's opening statement in our courtroom, where he will persuasively present his compelling case.
- The purpose of an opening statement is for counsel to communicate to the jury what they believe to be the truth about the crime committed.
- Furthermore, counsel will summarize that which they will support during the trial with competent testimony and evidence admissible in court.

- While I realize this all sounds very legally complicated, I deem it somewhat necessary to approach this using the setting of the court of law.
- Here's why; here-to-fore, God has been the one on trial, and not man. God has been accused of unjust crimes against the innocence of man.
- In the court of human sin, God has been unjust in damning sin. If God was innocent, if God was just, then He wouldn't allow evil into the world.

- This is why verse eighteen is so fascinating, Paul, in this his opening statement, is already accusing the defendants of suppressing evidence.
- In a criminal case, a motion to suppress is filed in order to bring a challenge to the truth of the evidence and whether it should be admissible.
- In a sense, Paul is denying them the filing of this motion by virtue of their knowing they're guilty, which is why they are suppressing this truth.

- It's extremely important to take note of how this suppressing of the truth would need to be a deliberate act, as it infers a premeditated crime.
- We're about to see that they knew the truth, because God Himself made it known to them, which is why they deliberately suppressed the truth.

2. They plainly know God's truth (Verse 19)

(19) since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

- v19 He says that the reason God's wrath is against them, is because what may be known about God was plainly made known to them by God.
- Seeing this is germane to our understanding for a number of reasons not the least of which is that the crime committed was premeditated.
- The defendant can't use the insanity plea, because they knew what they were doing was wrong, because what's right was made plain to them.

- Three thoughts, and we'll close with this; first, because the forensic evidence shows that this was a deliberate act, the death penalty is just.
- Secondly, the reason for deliberately suppressing the truth that was made plainly known about God, one is not guilty when not judged by God.
- Thirdly, we're all guilty of all charges, listed in this chapter. If we plead guilty, and sentenced to death, we can accept Jesus' death and go free.